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ABSTRACT

Challenging conventional wisdom that Mexican Americans were passive victims of their educational fates, this book examines the Mexican American struggle for equal education during the 1960s and 1970s in a California community "Brownfield." It looks at responses of a predominantly White school system and community to the growing number of Mexican American students in that era; Mexican American parents' confrontations with existing patterns of school governance; and the mix of federal, state, and local politics that produced educational reform. Chapter 1 provides a historical overview of Mexican American schooling experiences in the Southwest, particularly California, from the 1920s to 1954: how social, political, and economic trends shaped the schooling of Mexican American youth, and how ideologies of language, ethnicity, and culture were used to disenfranchise them. Chapter 2 gives background on Brownfield, including the politics of school district consolidation, which was pursued by educators and politicians for economic reasons but inadvertently improved educational opportunities for Mexican American children. Chapter 3 describes the mobilization of the Mexican American community and the challenges it mounted against the local educational power structure. Chapters 4-6 examine community controversies over year-round schooling, which adversely affected migrant families; bilingual education, mandated by state legislation but locally opposed in its implementation; and school desegregation, which was circumvented in White suburban areas. Contains references in notes, an extensive bibliography, and an index. (SV)

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